

feasibility study is being conducted with the help of IIFT to explore the possibility of entering into a Free Trade Agreement with certain countries in this region. Further details and its implications for India will emerge only after the study is completed.

Proposal for New Site of EPZ in Assam

2362. DR. ARUN KUMAR SARMA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to refer to reply to Unstarred Question No. 654 given in Rajya Sabha on 1st March, 1999 and state:

(a) the response of his Ministry in regard to the proposal of Government of Assam for a new site for EPZ;

(b) the action plan finalized to set up the EPZ and target set; and

(c) the progress already made in this direction including financial outlays earmarked?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) A proposal for conversion of Export Promotion Industrial Park at Guwahati into an Export processing Zone (EPZ) was considered in consultation with Planning Commission and the State Government. However, the Government of Assam did not support the proposal. Keeping in view the availability of funds and the need to optimise infrastructure facilities in the existing EPZs, there is no proposal at present for the Central Government to set up new Zones in the Country. However, EPZs can be established by the State Government or in the joint/private sector.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.